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ROGERS' CUNEIFORM PARALLELS TO THE OLD TESTAMENT¹

The well-known author of *A History of Babylonia and Assyria* has furnished students of the Old Testament with a large number of cuneiform texts which are regarded by him as parallel to, or illustrative of, the Old Testament documents. Whether or not the reader will find the choice of texts a happy one will depend largely upon his attitude toward the Old Testament. In view of all the absurd hypotheses which have been put forward in recent years in explanation of the "Old Testament in the light of the ancient Orient," one cannot help admiring the fortitude the author has shown in resisting for the most part the temptation to force upon his readers his own particular views as to the time, place, and extent of Israel's borrowing from Babylonia. While it will undoubtedly serve as a convenient handbook for the Assyriologist, the book is primarily intended for, and adapted to the needs of, "professors, teachers, and preachers who wish to lecture upon the manifold relations between Palestine and Babylonia and Assyria," and will furnish them the "means by which they may introduce themselves, and especially their pupils, directly to the sources" (p. xix). A comparison with Professor Ungnad's part ("Babylonisch-Assyrische Texte") of Gressmann's *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder* shows a remarkable similarity between these works both as to the materials selected and as to the arrangement of these, demonstrating, no doubt, that there is beginning to appear among scholars some unanimity as to what cuneiform records may rightly be used in illustration of the Old Testament. The book differs, however, from Gressmann's work in that the original texts are added in transliteration. This makes it possible to control, in most cases, the translations offered. In general these have been brought up to date, but the reviewer fails to see that any advance has been made by the author in the philological or historical interpretation of the texts.

The materials are arranged in the following groups: "Mythological Texts," "Hymns and Prayers," "Liturgical and Doctrinal Texts," "Chronological Materials," "Historical Texts," "Legal Texts."

The first group includes besides the well-known "Seven Tablets of Creation," the other, mostly fragmentary, versions of the Babylonian story of creation, which have been discovered to date. Other cosmological materials conclude the first section of this group. Next follow

¹ Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament. By Robert William Rogers. New York: Eaton & Mains, 1912. xxii+576 pages.

some texts in illustration of Babylonian demonology. The myth of Adapa shows correspondences with the biblical Paradise story. The Gilgamesh Epic is given in outline, with the section containing the Babylonian deluge story in full. Other, mostly fragmentary, but in some cases more ancient, versions of the flood story follow. The well-known account of Ishtar's descent to Hades is given in full, and the legend of Sargon concludes group I.

As a rule the footnotes are full enough to enable the student to understand the translations. An exception is the paragraph giving the "Babylonian Cosmogony according to Damascius," where the identification of Tauthe with Tiamat, etc., would hardly be made by those who are not familiar with the Assyrian.

Group II contains selected hymns to Sin, Marduk, Ramman, Ishtar, Tammuz, etc., together with a fragmentary text sometimes known as the Babylonian Job. The introductory note to this group is cautious but fair. An unprejudiced person might, however, also find in the Book of Psalms "much sameness of phrase" as well as some deviations from "pure religious character."

The third group gives certain passages in the lists of Babylonian deities in which this or that god is identified with other divinities. These identifications have furnished the fuel for a heated controversy over the "monotheistic tendencies" in the religion of the Babylonians. Whether they indicate a tendency toward pantheism rather than monotheism or henotheism, as Professor Rogers holds, is open to question. A few fragments illustrating the doctrine of substitution complete the group.

Under the caption "Chronological Materials," we find the "Babylonian King Lists A and B," a chronicle concerning Sargon and other early Babylonian rulers, the "Babylonian Chronicle," the "Assyrian Eponym List," the "Assyrian Eponym List with Notes," and the "Babylonian Canon." These lists, the reviewer is sorry to state, show practically no editing on the part of the author. For example, in the "Babylonian King List A" one finds the names Bitiliashi, Adumetash, Urzigurmash, etc., while elsewhere the corrected readings Kashtiliashi, Abirattash, Tazzigurumash, etc., are given.

Group V gives selected historical texts ranging from the time of Hammurabi to Cyrus, while in the sixth, and last group, "Legal Texts," we have given a boundary-stone (Kudurru) inscription, a certificate of adoption, a marriage contract, and finally, the Hammurabi Code complete.

In the Preface (p. xix) the author expresses his fear that there are "some uneven places in the transliteration, ever a pitfall in all languages, but they will serve sufficiently their practical purpose." This is putting it optimistically, for this unevenness meets one on almost every page of the book. If the index were in any respect complete, which is far from being the case, this might help the reader in controlling his references and readings. To give but a few examples of the very numerous inconsistencies in the English rendering of proper nouns: Under "Tishpak" the index has one reference, to p. 62. The name appears again on p. 193 as well as on p. 59 where it is still (or again?) read Tishkhu. Again, the index reads "Gaza, Sargon against, 327, 331," but omits the references to this city in the Tel el-Amarna letters (pp. 275 f.) where it appears as Khazati. In the "Assyrian Eponym List" (pp. 219 f.), we have such readings as Sil-bel, Bel-tarsi-(ilu)ma, Kurdi-Asshur, Shamash-DU-DU-SUN, while the same names appear in the "Assyrian Eponym List with Notes" (pp. 226 f.), as Çil-Bel, Bel-tarçi-iluma, Qurdi-Asshur, Shamash-ittalak-SUN(?). Compare also Unki, p. 228, and Unqi, p. 310; Kalkha (Kalah), pp. 227 f., and Calah, pp. 307 f.; Tirhaka, p. 338, Tirhaqa, p. 351, and Tarqu, p. 358. The reviewer knows from sad experience how utterly confused classes of students, who are in other respects seemingly intelligent, become when they confront this "variorum-alphabet" of the Assyriologists. If the student finds the *H* in *H*ammurabi transcribed as *H*, and is thereby enabled to give with some degree of accuracy the correct pronunciation of the name, why should he be led to mispronounce all other names which contain a *h* just because scholars feel that they must render *h* by *kh*? As a rule no one feels it necessary to render *t* by any other symbol than *t*; why, then, should we keep on confusing the student by rendering *k* by *q* or *s* by *ç*? No doubt it is desirable to have the greatest possible accuracy in the transliteration of the texts and there would be no serious objection to carrying over into the transcription of proper names the symbols *k*, *t*, *s*, and even *ç*, provided there was some attempt at consistency.

Although Professor Rogers has "spent many years upon the historical and chronological texts as a specialty," it is just here that the reviewer feels that he has fallen farthest behind the advance guard of Assyrian scholarship. In the introductions to the historical texts, the author has needlessly emphasized his "conservative" views on a number of vexed questions. One would certainly suppose that Tidal, king of the Goyyim = Tudhkhula, king of the Gutium, and Arad-Sin(Eri-Aku) = Arioch, etc., of Gen., chap. 14, fame, had had their day. In any case, if it

was deemed necessary to take up the problems connected with this chapter, in the interests of fairness there should have been some reference to the widely divergent views of other scholars, such as Eduard Meyer, and more definite statements as to the hypothetical nature of the interpretation offered. The account of the discovery of the Tel el-Amarna letters as given on pp. 252 f., might have been improved by a consultation of the introduction to Knudtzon's *Die el-Amarna-Tafeln*. But this is a small matter compared with some of the statements found in the author's account of Egyptian civilization in the Amarna period (pp. 254 f.). Here we are told that "at this time the Syrians stood at a higher stage of civilization than even the wonderfully gifted race of Egypt." Professor Breasted or Eduard Meyer would probably fail to be convinced of this by the arguments adduced. The fact that the correspondence of the Pharaoh with his Syrian vassals was conducted in the Babylonian language is made the occasion for comments on the value of these letters "as revealing the wide extent of Babylonian influence in western Asia." Again we are told that "though the Egyptians had made a political reorganization of the country, they were not able to supplant the Babylonian tongue by their own." In the first place, a careful study of the language of the Tel el-Amarna letters (by Böhl, *Die Sprache der Amarnatafeln*) has shown that the "Babylonian" of these letters is but the thinnest veneer over the native language of Canaan. In the second place, there is nothing to indicate that the Egyptians tried, or even desired to make Egyptian the language of Syria. As a matter of fact, "Babylonian" was the language of commerce in this period, and as the Tel el-Amarna letters themselves show, the "diplomat" attached himself to the merchant-caravans passing between Egypt and Babylonia, *over Syria*. At a later period Aramaic was the commercial-diplomatic language of the Orient, and yet no one thinks of dwelling upon the influence which the Aramean civilization must have exerted upon Nabateans, Persians, or Jews.

Professor Rogers still holds to Bir-idri as the probable reading of *im-idri* (p. 296), but since this is a point on which the reviewer is probably unduly prejudiced in view of his lengthy discussion of the matter elsewhere (*A.J.S.L.*, XXVII (1911), 267 f.), it may be passed over without further comment. The same may be said of the translation of *mâti-su e-mi-id* (p. 299) as "he forsook his land." (See Winckler, *M.D.O.G.*, No. 35, p. 43). The usefulness of the historical texts for the study of the history of Syria would have been vastly increased had more attention been given to the geographical references (to cities,

etc.). On the other hand, some of the identifications of cities mentioned in these texts should have been given with some indication of their uncertainty. Dunip as Heliopolis-Baalbek (p. 258) is a case in point. In like manner the boundaries assigned to Canaan and Amurru are much less definite than the statements on p. 259 indicate (see Böhl, *Kanaanäer und Hebräer*, pp. 40 f.).

As already stated the usefulness of this otherwise exceedingly valuable collection of materials is very much limited by the fact that the index is in no sense complete. One may add, in this connection, that most of the confusion in the transcription of proper names would have been avoided had a full index been compiled.

D. D. LUCKENBILL

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE ETHICS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT¹

Into his treatment of a large and important subject Dr. H. G. Mitchell has put a considerable amount of careful work and produced a book which should be of interest to many intelligent readers while serving as a textbook for those who are students in a more special sense. The method adopted is to discuss "the whole subject, with its various branches, in a succession of stages and especially as illustrated in the conduct or teaching of representative Hebrews." This avoids the dangers of an abstract dogmatic scheme which is apt to detach the subjects too much from actual life. Perhaps we may also reckon it as an advantage that it leaves something for the student himself to work out. "Anyone who wishes a comprehensive view of a particular topic can obtain it by simply piecing together my findings thereon in the successive chapters." Of course there are some topics that can be well treated in a general review and one giving a course of lectures might use both methods, but the writer of a book does well to choose one and the author manages well the detailed critical treatment that he has chosen. In ancient times "ethics" was not separated from religion and theology, but the author is true to the title of his book by seeking to set forth the ethical standpoint attained at different periods and the special contribution of particular prophets and documents to this side of human life.

The critical basis upon which the book rests is that which is now generally accepted by Old Testament scholars. Dr. Mitchell states

¹ *The Ethics of the Old Testament*. By Hinckley G. Mitchell, Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament in Tufts College. The University of Chicago Press, 1912. x+417 pages. \$2.00.